

Legislative Leadership Establishes 2013 Priorities



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House Speaker

Given the awe-inspiring natural beauty of our state, we are so fortunate to live, work and raise our families in Arizona. From our magnificent red and gold colored sunsets to our majestic ponderosa pine forests and natural wonders like the Grand Canyon, Arizona is the most ideal place to call home.

Possessing one of the most efficient irrigation networks in the world and blessed with an ideal climate, Arizona is one of the few places where a multitude of crops can be planted and harvested year-round. It thrills me to mention that our state boasts an annual agricultural output of \$12.4 billion which makes us the jewel and envy of the Southwest. The economic contribution this industry brings to our state is undeniable and serves as a major component of our fiscal stability and economic recovery.

This economic engine will continue to play a central role in the fiscal discipline the Arizona House Majority will exercise throughout the 51st legislative session. Through responsible Republican leadership, Arizona has already experienced two consecutive balanced budgets and invested \$217 million more in state programs and infrastructure.

Taking into account the current state of our economic affairs, it is difficult to imagine that nearly two years ago, Arizona ranked last among the states in job creation. Through the cooperation between wise legislators and the business community, Arizona is now ranked 11th in the nation.

Although our robust economy has weathered the fiscal storm, great caution must be used in making additional investment decisions. Slow economic growth, modest hiring gains in every industry and the potential costs associated with the Affordable Health Care Act continue to loom over the state. Nevertheless, I am confident we are on the path to economic recovery and that our continued fiscal discipline and economic growth will assure Arizona’s future prosperity.

I am cognizant of the fact that the high unemployment associated with this current recession has been especially challenging for the agricultural industry. Worse yet, the current immigration and labor issues facing our state and nation have had a compounding affect. It is indisputable that border failures threaten the livelihood and security of our citizens and pose significant challenges to all lawmakers.

That being said, I recognize the agricultural industry’s legitimate need for legal access to skilled immigrant labor pools. Undocumented immigrants with no felonious records residing in the US must be given the opportunity to make their presence known without fear of deportation. They should also be afforded the ability to apply for temporary legal status and be granted a temporary work visa based on the finite needs of the industries that require their services. We must all come together to develop workable solutions to ensure the strategic vigor of our country as well as the economic prosperity that sustains it.

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